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S E C R E T NEW DELHI 003458

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [ETTC](#) [KNNP](#) [UK](#) [IN](#) [NSSP](#)

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR GUIDANCE: INDIA AND PROLIFERATION SECURITY

REF: A. NEW DELHI 3334

[1](#)B. IIR 6 844 0339 05

Classified By: Charge Robert O. Blake for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

[1](#)1. (C) In the run-up to Defense Minister Mukherjee's planned June 27 arrival in Washington, Mission continues to be approached by senior GOI officials inquiring about US deliberations on India's admission to the PSI core group. In this context, MEA officials cite the April 15 discussion between the Secretary and Foreign Minister Natwar Singh, during which Natwar indicated strong GOI interest in PSI, and flagged this as topic for the Indian Defense Minister's upcoming visit to Washington. As reported ref A, British NSA Nigel Sheinwald heard a similar pitch from the MEA, linked to the GOI desire to associate itself with PSI before a planned fall 2005 PSI exercise in the Indian Ocean. Pressed on the need for India to declare support for the PSI Statement of Interdiction Principles, Sheinwald's interlocutors asked whether such a statement would lead to membership in the PSI core group.

[1](#)2. (S) As a practical matter, the GOI has already begun to associate itself with PSI-type activities. Ref B, for instance, describes a recent engagement in defense intelligence channels through which the Indian Navy boarded a vessel of interest to acquire ownership and crew-list data sought by US agencies. Natwar Singh and other senior GOI officials have also begun to speak publicly of the need for new arrangements to combat the proliferation of WMD technology.

[1](#)3. (C) Action Request: Against this background, and bearing in mind bilateral discussions going back to Secretary Powell's March 2004 visit to New Delhi, mission requests guidance we can use in responding to GOI queries about the status of US deliberations on India's request for membership in the PSI core group.

BLAKE